

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. cancelled.

2. cancelled.

3. cancelled

4. cancelled

5. (currently amended) A method of detecting the presence or absence of *E. coli* virulence-related genes in a sample comprising:

adding the sample to an amplification mixture including at least one pair of primers selected from the group consisting of ~~at least 15 contiguous nucleotides~~ of: TCTCAGTGGGCGTTCTTATG (SEQ ID NO. 1) and TACCCCTCAACTGCTAATA (SEQ ID NO. 2); GCGGTTTTATTTGCATTAGC (SEQ ID NO. 5) and TCCCGTCAACCTTCACTGTA (SEQ ID NO. 6); and combinations thereof and primer pairs for the detection of at least one of the following *Escherichia coli* virulence-related genes selected from the group consisting of: eaeA, EHEC-HlyA, Stx2c, Stx2d, Stx2e, rfbE and fliC;

incubating the amplification mixture under conditions which promote DNA amplification; and

identifying the amplification products, thereby simultaneously assaying for the presence of major *E. coli* virulence factors in said sample.